Nominations & Remuneration Committee

Date of Meeting	Thursday 10 October 2019
Paper Title	Diversity Succession Planning Review 2019
Agenda Item	12
Paper Number	NRC1-I
Responsible Officer	Board Secretary
Status	Disclosable
Action	For Decision

1. Report Purpose

1.1 To review progress in relation to Board diversity succession planning since October 2018 and agree any changes to planning for 2019-20.

2. Recommendations

2.1. The Committee is invited to:

- **consider** the report on progress against the current Diversity Succession Plan;

- **agree** any changes to the plan for 2019-20.

3. Background

3.1 The Scottish Specific Duties (which are provided for in the Equality Act 2010) include college board members within the mainstreaming duty[1]. The regulations were amended in 2016 to introduce a new requirement for listed public authorities to publish the gender composition of their boards and to produce succession plans to increase the diversity of their boards.

3.2 Board diversity refers, in the context of the Scottish Specific Duties, to the protected characteristics defined in the Equalities Act. In terms of the Scottish Government's and the Board's own expectations of what will lead to strong and effective governance, however, diversity refers also to the range of social, educational, economic, and other perspectives that will make for a balanced and representative board. That broad and inclusive definition of diversity has been the basis for GCRB's planning since a Diversity Succession Plan was first agreed in 2017.

3.3 While the Board cannot exercise influence over Student and Staff appointments or the Board Chair, Non-Executive appointments/extensions and the appointment/extension of College Board Chairs are within the Board's powers.

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[1] While GCRB is exempt from many of the mainstreaming and other reporting requirements as these apply only to organisations with twenty or more staff, its practices must nonetheless reflect the equality principles inherent in the reporting requirements, and it must comply with those requirements that are specific to board-level practice and those that apply to all organisations irrespective of size.

3.4 The Committee is invited to review:

- how effectively diversity succession planning has been implemented in the course of appointments;

- how effectively the Board has discharged its duties in other ways in the interests of strengthening diversity during the year, for example, through development and training.

3.5 The following report provides:

- a detailed breakdown of current gender balance;

- an outline report on activity relevant to board diversity and diversity planning in the course of the last year;

- an updated Diversity Succession Plan for consideration and approval for the coming year;

3.6 No non-executive recruitment activity is currently planned for 2019-20, however, two of the three Assigned College Chairs reach the end of their first term of office in 2020.

4. Gender Balance

4.1 Gender balance is one important aspect of board diversity that is currently monitored and reported. The Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act was passed in 2018. The Scottish Government is currently consulting on guidance to implement the Act (GCRB submitted a response to the consultation).

4.2 Other equalities data is retained (anonymised) when new GCRB Board Members are appointed, but is not currently collected by Scottish Government[2].

4.3 While GCRB has subscribed to the aspirational 50/50 by 2020 target, it is only with regard to Non-Executive appointments that the Board must comply with legislation requiring it to act, in circumstances where there are two equally qualified candidates for a vacancy, in the interests of appointing an equal number of male and female Members.

	Male	Female
Full Board	**10 members: 56%**	**8 members: 44%**
By membership category		
Chair of the Board	●	1
Non Executives[3]	5: 50%	5: 50%
Assigned College Chairs	3: 100%	●
Staff Members	1: 50%	1: 50%
Student Members	1: 50%	1: 50%

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[2] The Scottish Government has said that it will collate board data on protected characteristics from across the sector and return contextualised data to individual boards.

5. **Progress Report 2018-19**

5.1 Appointments

a) In overseeing recruitment plans for a new Non-Executive Members, the Committee reviewed the current membership and skills balance and considered the Board's needs going forward.

b) The Committee invited Helen Wright, former trustee of Changing the Chemistry, to serve as the Independent Person in the recent recruitment round, alongside the Chair, NRC Chair and a Student Member. The gender balance of the panel was 3 female:1 male.

c) Application materials, including the equalities monitoring form, were reviewed to ensure that these were up-to-date and reflected the refreshed skills matrix developed by the committee in 2018-19.

d) The new Non-Executive appointment has strengthened the diversity of the Board by introducing experience and knowledge in the key areas of social value, community engagement, and estates.

e) The new appointment has maintained the 50/50 gender balance among Non-Executive Members.

f) The Board also agreed the co-option of a second candidate, whose business and entrepreneurship skills, and experience of mentoring women from a minority ethnic background in Glasgow entering into education and business, will provide a new and valuable perspective on the work of the Board. It was the Committee's intention, in making the recommendation, that the co-option should also serve as a development opportunity for the co-optee.

5.2 Raising Awareness of the Board and its Work

a) Use of digital communications has increased significantly over the last year. We have enhanced our social media channels, specifically Twitter and professional/career social network LinkedIn, extending the Board's reach into different communities, developing stakeholder relations and highlighting the positive work of the Board.

b) Plans for a shared online space to promote the work of the Glasgow Boards and vacancies have still to be progressed, however, the GCRB website is currently being reviewed with a view to making it more accessible and user-friendly.

c) Stakeholder relations are strengthened with partner organisations. We send regular e-bulletins and Spotlight magazine, highlighting key areas of national interest, to keep our stakeholder audience informed, including local government and key organisations.

5.3 Improving Induction and Support

a) Induction arrangements have been strengthened further during 2018-19 including:

- progress with the introduction of Committee inductions;

- more indepth inductions for Student Members (and the Chair of GCRSE) tailored to their needs;

- full Board and Committee induction for the new Co-opted Member.

b) Enhanced arrangements are being introduced for Student Members, expanding on extant support arrangements (including pre-meetings) to facilitate a series of key reports to Board throughout the year.

5.4 Developing Board Structures and Processes

a) The Committee recommended its first co-option to the Board in June, acting on its stated intention to enhance the Board's diversity of perspectives and strengthen the 'pipeline' for prospective board members.

b) The Committee oversaw the development of a revised skills matrix during 2018-19 - seeking a broader assessment of the skills, knowledge, experience and attributes that support good governance - which informed the recent recruitment exercise.

c) At its June meeting, the Board approved the creation of an Advisory Group, which will provide a new means for the Board to consult and engage more widely in exploring its strategic priorities, and thereby diversify the basis for its decision-making.

5.5 Enhancing Board Member Training and Awareness

a) Training sessions in 2018-19 have not focused on diversity specifically, however, the Board has continued to receive presentations from a range of individuals and organisations throughout the year to enhance its understanding of stakeholder perspectives.

5.6 Working in Partnership

a) GCRB facilitated a Mental Health event in February 2019, to which the Glasgow college boards and external parties were invited, to develop a collaborative approach to tackling mental health issues in the college region.

b) The involvement of Changing the Chemistry in the recent recruitment round proved to be a very positive experience and provides a basis for further engagement with that and other organisations in future.

6. Current Plan of Action for Promoting Board Diversity

6.1 Introduction

a) GCRB has had a Diversity Succession Plan in place since 2017, setting out its approach to ensuring a diverse and representative governing body for the Glasgow college region. This plan is reviewed annually by the GCRB Nominations & Remuneration Committee, which has oversight of GCRB's recruitment and appointment activity.

b) The Scottish Government's guidance on succession planning for public sector boards makes the following case for board diversity:

Diverse boards are more likely to be better able to understand their stakeholders and to benefit from fresh perspectives, new ideas, vigorous challenges and broad experience. This diversity of thought and contribution should result in better corporate governance and decision-making, and, in turn, support continuous improvement of our public services in Scotland.

A Board that reflects the people and communities that it serves is also more likely to have credibility with them, thus promoting public trust in Board decision-making.

6.2 Outline of GCRB's Key Strategic Outcomes

a) The Glasgow Region Strategic Plan for College Education 2017-2022, seeks to build Scotland's most inclusive, most responsive, and most effective regional college system through the following areas of strategic focus:

- Ambitious for Glasgow: better lives in a better economy

- Ambitious for Learners: widening access to life-changing learning

- Ambitious for Colleges: unlocking regional potential and adding value

6.3 Overview of Target Groups

a) The Glasgow college region comprises a large, diverse and predominantly metropolitan population and as such, a Board that is truly representative of the Glasgow college region should include members drawn from a range of social and employment backgrounds relative to the Glasgow college region, and embody as far as possible diversity in terms of the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.

b) GCRB has identified, together with the Glasgow College Boards, a need to attract in particular young members, members drawn from BME communities and members with disabilities.

c) Given the Board's leadership role in co-ordinating the delivery of a coherent and high quality regional college education service, members with extensive leadership experience and knowledge of the education sector are essential to GCRB fulfilling its ambitions.

d) Members drawn from industry and commerce – the major Scottish and regional industries, but also SMEs and start-ups – will bring an understanding of the economy into which students will emerge and which they must be equipped to support and lead.

e) Understanding of the wider economic and political context in which colleges are currently operating is also key, given the changing nature of post-16 education including the move towards more coherent public services and towards a learner journey that is seen as a continuum with alternative progression routes available to learners. Thus, board members drawn from public sector leadership positions and other areas of the education spectrum who have knowledge and experience of the wider educational context are an important component of the Board.

f) Given that almost a third of the region's students come from the 10% most deprived areas, the Regional Board should include members who have a sound understanding of

social and economic factors affecting the Glasgow region and drivers for social and economic development.

g) The Board's appointment decisions should also reflect the fact that successful regional governance depends on effective relationships and partnership working across a complex and unique FE governance structure.

h) The complexity and scale of GCRB's financial responsibilities demand a particular focus on members with financial expertise and the increasing regulation and scrutiny of the sector and its stewardship of public funds necessitate strength, too, in the fields of audit and risk.

7. **Proposed Actions for promoting diversity among Board members**

7.1 Raising Awareness of the Board and its Work

a) Ensure statement on diversity and gender balance is clearly visible on Board's web pages.

b) Continue to develop ways to promote the Board and its work to a wider audience, for example, through social media, stakeholder communications, and more regular updates to keep information on the website live.

c) Continue to work with Equality and Diversity professionals within the college region and external organisations to explore ways to reach underrepresented groups and promote inclusion.

d) Explore further and, in collaboration with the Colleges, take forward suggestions from the Joint Boards Diversity Event, for example:

- Glasgow-wide information events;

- An information leaflet;

- Use of networks to extend reach into underrepresented communities;

- A shared online presence to promote diversity.

7.2 Improving Induction and Support

a) Consider co-option and/or shadowing to engage less-experienced candidates with potential in the work of the Board.

b) Explore option of mentoring for new and/or less experienced Board members, creating a more supportive environment.

c) Encourage good candidates who are not appointed by providing constructive feedback and other opportunities to engage in the work of the Board that may support their development.

7.3 Developing Board Structures and Processes

a) Continue to develop the Nominations & Remuneration Committee's role, for example, in developing its approach to identifying candidates for co-option.

b) Continue to review recruitment procedures against the draft checklist to ensure they optimise the potential for underrepresented groups to access membership opportunities and provide for reasonable adjustments during application/interview stages.

c) Identify and remove potential barriers for appointed members where possible, for example, by keeping the timing of meetings under review to ensure those who are working and/or have childcare commitments are able to attend, or allowing for attendance by video-conference.

d) Consider ways to encourage members to declare and 'own' their diversity.

e) Progress Board Members' self-assessment against the revised skills matrix to create a more meaningful record of the Board's strengths and areas for development.

7.4 Enhancing Board Member Training and Awareness

a) Seek to ensure diversity features in the Board's annual development programme.

b) Identify external opportunities and encourage Board members' attendance (for example, Changing the Chemistry, ACOSVO or Scottish Government-run events).

7.5 Working in Partnership

a) Continue to work with the College Boards to build on the positive outcomes of the September 2018 event.

b) Continue to work with other sector boards/board secretaries, CDN and others to develop and share good practice across the sector.

c) Engage with bodies, for example, Glasgow City Council, Scottish Government, ACOSVO or the Institute of Directors that may be promoting programmes to develop the 'pipeline' of candidates for non-executive board roles from diverse backgrounds.

8. Risk Analysis

8.1 If GCRB does not have a sufficiently diverse and skilled membership, it will not operate as effectively as it might. The action plan contained within this report is therefore intended primarily to mitigate risk 0011: the capacity and capability of the Board is inadequate and standards of governance fall below the level required.

9. Equalities Implications

9.1 The Diversity Succession Plan is compliant with relevant Equalities legislation and regulation and supports the Board's development with regard to equality and diversity objectives.

10. Legal Implications

10.1. There are no new legal implications associated with this report.

11. Resource Implications

11.1. There is the potential for modest cost and in-kind resource implications in progressing collaborative activities.

12. Strategic Implications

12.1 This report is not directly relevant to the Regional Outcome Agreement, however, a balanced Board and robust governance arrangements are the essential to the effective determination and delivery of GCRB objectives.